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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE-OPELOUSAS DIVISION

JOHN VALDES
MELISSA VALDES

CIVIL ACTION NO. 05-0908

VS.

JUDGE MELANÇON

HOME STATE COUNTY MUTUAL INS. CO.
DARREN JANCZAK

MAGISTRATE JUDGE METHVIN

ORDER REQUIRING SUBMISSION ON JURISDICTIONAL AMOUNT

This automobile accident case was removed from a local state court based on the allegation of defendants Home State County Mutual Insurance Company and Darren Janczak that the matter in controversy exceeds \$75,000 and that this court therefore has diversity jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §1332. Defendants' allegation as to the amount in controversy is unsupported by specific facts.

A removing defendant must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000 by either (1) demonstrating that it is facially apparent that the claims are likely above \$75,000 or (2) setting forth the specific facts in controversy that support a finding of the jurisdictional amount. Simon v. Wal Mart Stores, 193 F.3d 848 (5th Cir. 1999); Lockett v. Delta Airlines, Inc., 171 F.3d 295 (5th Cir. 1999).

In accordance with state law,¹ plaintiffs have not specified the numerical value of their damage claims, and the jurisdictional amount is not otherwise "facially apparent" from the complaint. Simon, 193 F.3d at 850. Plaintiffs allege the following facts: On April 11, 2005, the plaintiff John Valdes' vehicle was struck by Darren Janczak's vehicle, causing Valdes to

¹ La.Code Civ.P. art. 893.

suffer “severe and permanently disabling injuries to his mind and body.”² Plaintiffs also allege an unspecified amount of medical expenses, loss of earnings, property damages, and they request attorney’s fees. These general allegations are an insufficient basis upon which to determine the existence of diversity jurisdiction.

In removal cases in which the jurisdictional amount is not “facially apparent,” the court may require the removing party to submit “summary-judgment-type evidence, relevant to the amount in controversy at the time of removal.” Allen v. R&H Oil & Gas Co., 63 F.3d 1326, 1336 (5th Cir. 1995) (emphasis added). Relevant jurisdictional facts which should be included in the response to this Order include the following: (1) a description of the nature and severity of plaintiff’s injuries; (2) plaintiff’s diagnosis, including whether surgery was recommended at the time of removal; (3) whether the plaintiff underwent surgery by the time of removal, and the nature thereof; (4) duration of medical treatment; (5) dollar amount of medicals incurred at the time of removal; (6) time of removal estimate of the dollar amount of medicals which plaintiff will probably incur in the future based upon the medical diagnosis; (7) lost wages incurred at time of removal; (8) lost wages which plaintiff will probably incur in the future based upon the medical diagnosis; and (9) citations to caselaw involving similar facts which reflect verdicts in the amount of \$75,000.00 or more. These facts should be presented in summary-judgment-type evidence.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that on or before **November 30, 2005**, defendants shall file a memorandum setting forth specific facts in controversy which support a finding that

² Rec. Doc. 1.

the jurisdictional amount exists. Supporting documentation and/or affidavits are advisable. A copy of the memorandum shall be provided to the undersigned and opposing counsel.

Plaintiffs will be allowed ten days to reply to defendants' arguments.

Signed at Lafayette, Louisiana on November 9th, 2005.


Mildred E. Methvin
United States Magistrate Judge
800 Lafayette St., Suite 3500
Lafayette, LA 70501
(337) 593-5140 FAX 593-5155

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